

# JOURNAL

International Animated Film

THE BRITISH FILM ACADEMY

WINTER 1956-57

# THE JOURNAL of the BRITISH FILM ACADEMY

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*The Editorial Board is very grateful to John Halas for undertaking the Editorship of this special issue of the Academy JOURNAL, and to the many companies and individuals who have supplied stills.*

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The Academy Council gratefully acknowledge the generosity of Kodak, Ltd. for placing funds at their disposal to cover the costs of this issue of the British Film Academy JOURNAL.

*Published by*

THE BRITISH FILM ACADEMY, 60 QUEEN ANNE STREET, LONDON, W.1

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

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# EDITORIAL

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THE MAIN PART of this JOURNAL is entirely devoted to the animated film in all its many forms and purposes—cartoon and puppet, entertainment and instruction, propaganda and advertising. In several countries for different purposes the animated film has been developed in recent years on a scale that makes it an important, if separate, branch of production—with its own problems of artistry, technique and studio organisation. The Editorial Board of the JOURNAL is grateful to John Halas for undertaking the editorship of this issue, which we hope will serve as a useful introduction to the International Festival of Animated Films which he is organising early in 1957 in London at the National Film Theatre in association with the British Film Institute.

## THE INTERNATIONAL ANIMATED FILM

JOHN HALAS

THE significant factor about the film industry during the past few years is the sudden revolution in cinema presentation. Whilst great battles raged over the shapes of cinema screens, from Cinerama and Cinemascope to Cinemiracle, another revolution has taken place. But this has passed practically unnoticed. No headlines, no posters to publicise this event. It is the incredible expansion of the animation film industry all over the world.

The growth of animation output on a world wide basis is, indeed, spectacular. In Western Europe and in North America, production has increased several times over the 1950 output, whilst, east of Germany, new centres of production have emerged, particularly in Poland, Rumania and even as far afield as China. In England, too, output has risen threefold in the last few years, with an increase of personnel from 150 to over 400 artists.

This expansion is comparable to the sudden growth of live-action production during the period of 1922 to 1926. An interesting factor about this expansion is that it has taken place at a time when the world output of live-action has gradually decreased. It must, however, be realised that, even with the present expansion, animation forms only a small part in the total structure of the film industry, although creatively a vital one.

The reason for the increased demand is not entirely the new opportunities Television has created for this medium. Television has helped only cartoonists in the Western countries; in the East other influences are apparent. For instance, in Czechoslovakia, Poland and China animated cartoons and puppet films are fostered as national arts and, as a result, such productions enjoy direct state sponsorship in the same way as our Old Vic Theatre. Similarly, animation in Russia is

integrated into the national film programme, and plays quite a considerable part in providing entertainment for the younger generation. The Moscow cartoon film studio now numbers 550 artists and, as in other eastern countries, the cartoon industry is still in the process of expansion to provide more and a wider variety of entertainment films. On the other hand, here and further west, animated film production for theatrical entertainment has, if anything, receded. Against this, new avenues have opened up for animation, in the form of industrial sponsorship—sponsorship through international authorities for informational cartoons, advertising films for cinemas and Television, and entertainment programme films for Television. These new sources of work have attracted some of the leading artists previously engaged on theatrical films, as well as quite a few talented artists from outside the film industry. However, it must be realised that, here in the West, the revenue from cinema cartoons has dropped so drastically due to the reluctance of the cinemas to raise the rentals even above pre-war level, that it is becoming impossible to recoup the high cost of production. Animation therefore depends increasingly on the *other* sources of sponsorship. The fact that an expansion is in progress proves how much the public enjoys and appreciates this medium.

The medium of animation at its best can be an important factor both in the creative cinema and in graphic art. In such categories, the quantitative expansion of large footages turned out in many countries matters little. The inquiring mind of an experimentalist or an uncompromising attitude of an artist with his pencil matters more than large output. The spirit of experimentalism against heavy odds is typical of this medium, but, on the other hand, it is significant to notice that the masters of this medium are possibly the last

remnants of guild art craftsmen remaining in our century.

The elements of an animated picture—story, movement, time, colour, design, texture, sound and free imagination—are apparent in different territories to widely varying extents. For instance, we are accustomed to expect excellent timing, expert animation and sufficient imagination, mainly in comic-strip technique, from the U.S.A., but it is a pleasant surprise if such values are noticeable in films made in Czechoslovakia and Japan. Actually, the technical supremacy of American cartoons no longer exists. We notice in the last few years the incredible technical advancement and perfection of the Russian cartoons, and regret bitterly the conspicuous absence of up-to-date design and the lack of free imagination. In this respect, the Russian cartoon is not unlike the average Hollywood animal cartoon product, but with a slower timing to suit the local audience. On the other hand, we notice that films arriving from Canada contain the ingredients of the best design and wonderful texture, indicating a progressively free spirit amongst the creators. Films from China reveal good intentions in an endeavour to use imaginative fantasy, but, as yet, the technical skill is lacking. The opportunity is there, if not the experience. On the other hand, in France experience is more readily available than the opportunity to make theatrical cartoons, and we notice that the best efforts are achieved by courageous, individual animators whose work excels more in the category of pictorial values than in good story telling.

From broad perspective, it is encouraging to see this medium becoming so much an integral part of national film activity in so many countries. So far, however, the public has only had the chance to see American cartoons, due to their octopus-like world

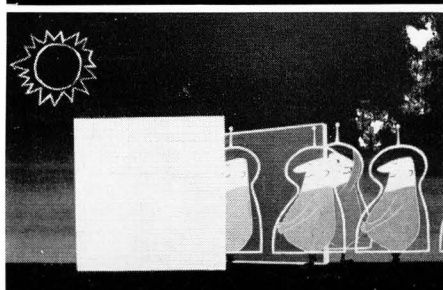
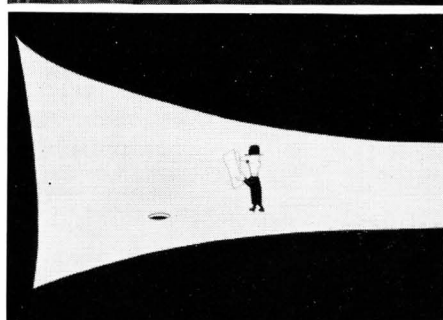
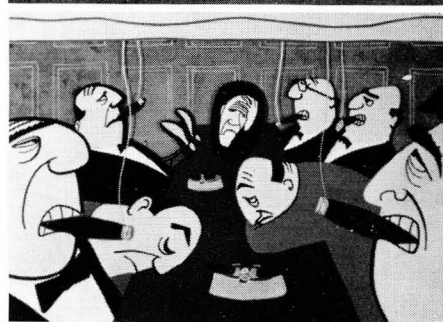
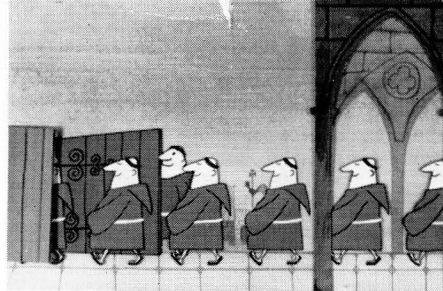


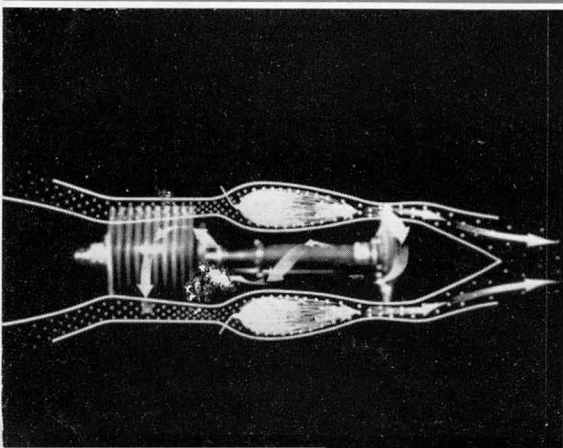
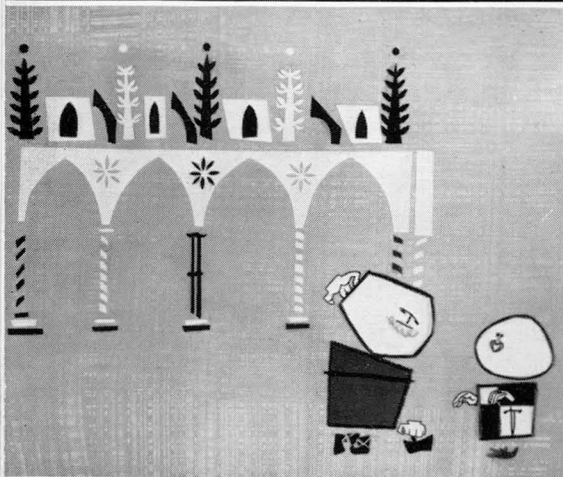
distribution. The first international animated film festival in Britain which will take place at the National Film Theatre during February and March 1957 will try to show how wide the production of animated films has spread throughout the world.

The process of making cartoon films is closely confined over an animation desk, and therefore it is not a habit among cartoonists to work over each other's shoulders. There is thus little chance of personally inter-changing ideas and methods, in spite of the fact that the final results are so international. It is hoped that our festival will bring together for the first time in England a number of interesting minds to set off a few sparks.

The screening of some 150 films, including 12 out of the 31 features ever produced, should prove the great flexibility of which animation is capable and the very wide variety of styles. But our purpose has also an immediate practical intention. At this moment, the newsreel and specialised cinemas are short of good, new animated films. There need not be a shortage. European animation developed some time ago to standards at least equal to those achieved by the United States in the theatrical field. The best of the Continental films are gradually being shown in local cinemas. It is high time that European cartoons received similar treatment. It is hoped that cinema exhibitors, as well as our film-maker colleagues and the public, will find the contents of the festival interesting, entertaining and beneficial.

Representatives from the seven major producing countries will contribute short articles to this issue, giving a background of the operations and future expectations of animation activities in their respective countries, in the hope that their information will widen the knowledge of our individual operations to our mutual benefit.





## Great Britain

# ANIMATION IN BRITAIN

JOHN HUNTLEY

IN America, most animation work is linked with the major studios. Tom and Jerry come from the M.G.M. studios, Popeye from Paramount, Tweety Pie from Warners; even the U.P.A. unit works under the general umbrella of Columbia, whilst Disney's is almost a separate major studio in itself.

In Britain, animation is a family business, operating in the style of the medieval craftsmen's guilds. The Units tend to stay together in small communities, usually in converted houses or tiny offices. Personnel grow up with their production companies, often entering the business direct from University or Art School. Training is done by experience, as the young learn from the old in the day-to-day work at the animation tables. There is a struggle to maintain continuity of production. Leadership is based on the personality of one or two people who often manage the whole operation as a kind of family concern, imposing their style to a degree which they themselves would scarcely admit, for many strive to encourage as much individual experiment as possible amongst those who work for them.

The Units are divided into four main categories. First, there are the groups who produce sponsored films but, because they have been in existence for a long time and have established some measure of independence, are able to conduct occasional experiments that lead to theatrical distribution, or even to produce films specifically for the entertainment market. Halas and Batchelor Productions are a Unit of this kind.

John Halas came to this country before the War, having worked in Hungary with George Pal; Joy Batchelor first met him in London and shared in the making of animation films, both here and in Budapest. They married and now operate the company under joint control. Like most British Units, they depend on sponsorship of various forms for their existence. This comes from three main sources:

1. *Official Bodies, Government Departments or International Authorities.* Examples of films made recently in this category include *To Your Health*, for the World Health Organisation; *Basic Fleetwork*, for the Admiralty; *The Sea*, for the Ford Foundation; and *The Candlemaker*, for the United Lutheran Church in America.

2. *Sponsorship through Industry.* Recent films include *Power to Fly*, for the British Petroleum Company, and *Invisible Exchange* for Shell.

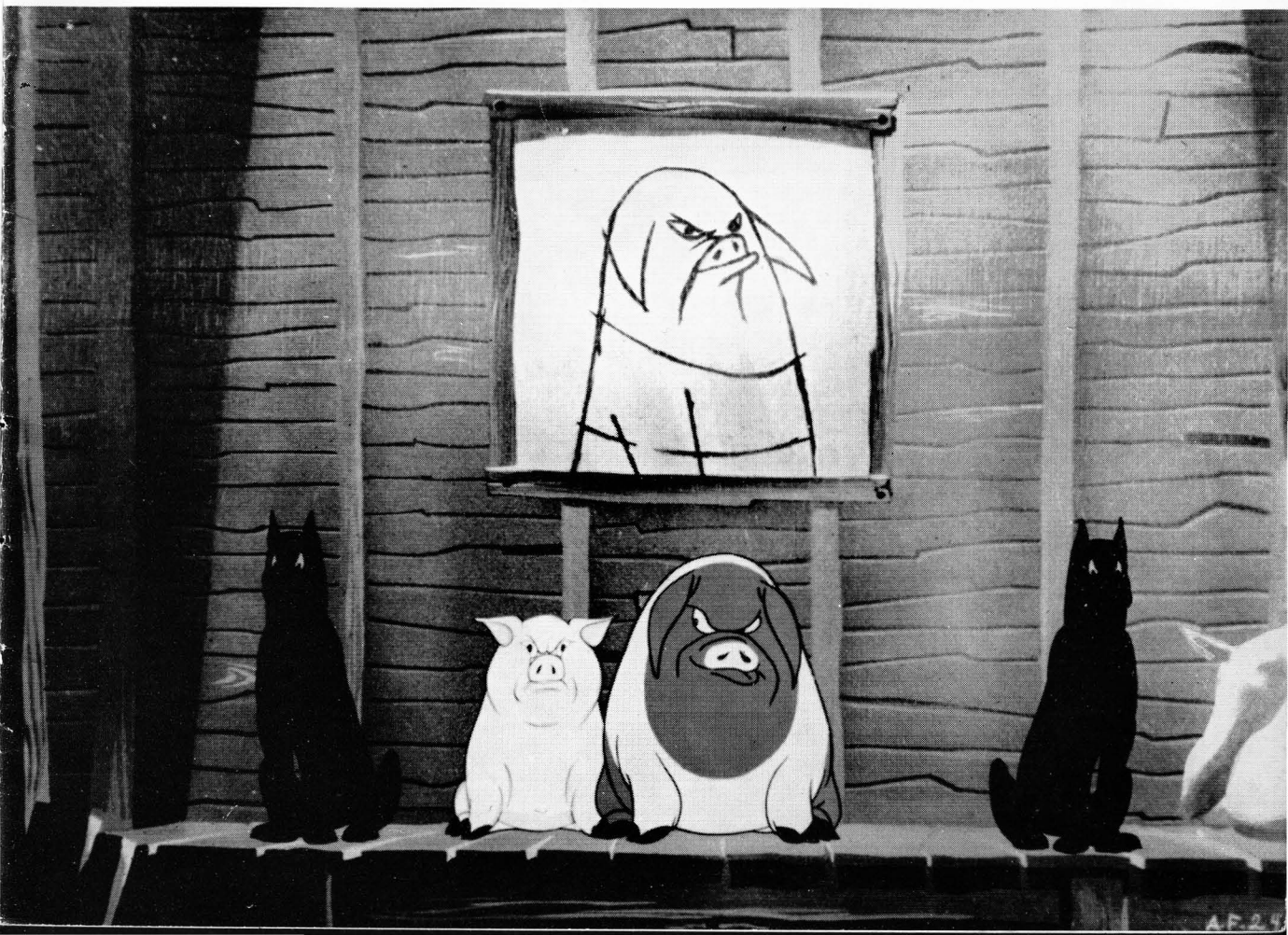
3. *Direct Advertisements, made now mainly for Commercial Television.* Halas and Batchelor made the famous *Murraymints* series, as well as a special series for Dunlop.

Using the resources gained over years of work in the "bread-and-butter" business, Halas and Batchelor have been able to amuse themselves (and very large cinema audiences) with such pictures as their delightful *History of the Cinema*, which was chosen for the Royal Film Performance in 1956. Of a more serious character was the feature length *Animal Farm*, a rare example of an attempt to use the cartoon film for the interpretation of a complicated political satire. The Unit that made these films is now ninety strong; it is run personally by John Halas and Joy Batchelor, both of whom are active at every stage in the making of the films as well as handling the complicated business problems that arise in sustaining the flow of the sponsorship so essential to their continued existence. The shaping of spiralling movements around little twirls of Matyas Seiber's clever wood-wind orchestrations in well-known tunes is characteristic of their work, as well as a love of perky, bouncing little men who tackle everything from Income Tax forms to oil-well drilling with a gay, impertinent but pleasing confidence.

Halas and Batchelor produced the first feature-length cartoon in this country (*Animal Farm*), the first stereoscopic experiment in animation (*The Owl and the Pussycat*), and the first major puppet-animation production (*Figurehead*). Ever since their formation in 1940, they have remained completely independent of any financial links with other organisations.

The second type of Unit in Britain is that devoted entirely to sponsored work, but taking full advantage of the chances offered them by enlightened business concerns to experiment. The William Larkins Studio, operated by Geoffrey Sumner and Theodore Thumwood, was started in 1942 under the name of Analysis Films. It became part of the Film Producer's Guild in 1947 and, as Larkins Studio, has since produced about 820 short animated films. There are seventy people in the Unit, which turns out about 30,000 feet of final-cut material a year. Personnel tends to remain static, and the Unit's tradition in training can be gathered from the fact that, on a recent prize-winning film, the average age of the production team was 23.

*Animal Farm* (Great Britain)







As in the case of Halas and Batchelor, certain of their films have broken through to the theatrical field, although they have not so far made films except to order. *Men of Merit*, for example, was shown in some 3,000 cinemas in this country alone; 602 copies were printed by Technicolor. The studio's style is still, perhaps almost unconsciously, influenced by the work of Peter Sachs, notably by his angular figures, clear-cut lines and sharply-defined backgrounds, in which detail is reduced to a minimum. *Earth is a Battlefield*, their current production, has a clever extension of the technique in a series of disjointed, cut-out figures which perform to a sound track in the rhyming style of *Enterprise*, an earlier film by Peter Sachs.

The third main type of animation Unit is exemplified by Nicholas and Mary Spargo's group at Henley-on-Thames. Formed to produce material specifically for Commercial Television, the Unit now consists of eleven people working in a large room over a shop in the centre of the town. Following the well-established pattern, there are already two trainees in the group, working on the fifteen, thirty- and fifty-second commercials for which the Unit was set up. Because they are lively and imaginative, work flows at a fast pace; Nicholas Spargo spends much of his time on the business side at the moment, while his wife is usually to be found in the studio. Both gained their experience in the tough school of the David Hand Unit at Cookham.

In addition to the independent units, there are a number of small animation groups in Britain attached to certain large organisations like the Shell Film Unit. Francis Rodker and a small team of specialists have been producing excellent diagrams and animated sections for the Shell Unit since its formation in 1935. Three animation cameras are in use, each producing about 4,000 feet of exposed film a year.



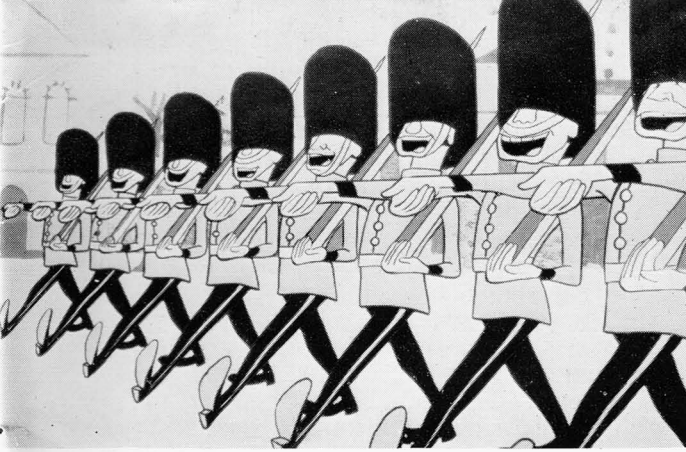
*A Short Vision, Down a Long Way* (Great Britain)

Finally, there are the experimental groups, whose status borders between professional and amateur. Typical is the case of Joan and Peter Foldes, who produce animated films in their own home in Edgware. Peter Foldes, like John Halas, came to London from Hungary; he met his wife here and they now work together on all their films. *Animated Genesis*, their first film, was made on their own resources up to picture rough-cut stage. It was then shown to the British Film Institute, who persuaded Sir Alexander Korda to see it; he completed the sound track and gave the picture distribution through British Lion. *A Short Vision*, the six-minute story of an artist's impression of the world destroyed by nuclear fission, was also made as a private venture in the beginning; it was completed with the help of the British Institute's Experimental Production Fund, and later shown on American television.

The personal quality of British animation films derives from the struggle for independence, the imprint of a beneficent sponsorship and the style of those who founded their own groups and continue to run them. The system is not without drawbacks. Experiment, especially in subject matter, is always subordinate to the needs of the sponsor. Full public screenings are the exception, however delicate the advertisement. The Units are too busy with their own work to indulge in large-scale publicity. They have to contend with the fact that the major circuits are, by-and-large, completely deaf to their work. By contrast many European countries encourage the work of their animation units.

In spite of these difficulties, British animated films have won many international awards. These films are being used increasingly in the United States, both in the cinemas and over television. The battle for a screening is being won at long last; in every country, except Britain.





*Murraymints Commercial, The Owl and the Pussycat (Great Britain)*

U.S.A.

## ANIMATED FILMS IN THE U.S.A.

PHILIP STAPP, New York

AT THE Cannes Film Festival in the spring of 1956 I overheard a ticket taker remark to a puzzled tourist who evidently had tried unsuccessfully to get into the premiere of one of the full length feature presentations, "Il y a aussi des petites dessins-animés." Judging from the tone in which he spoke, half condescending, half affectionate, his words seemed to imply "tough luck, but as a consolation there are some little cartoons to be seen if you care to have a look." He was referring to the International Festival of Animated Films which was taking place at the same time in another part of the cinema Palais. His attitude was similar to that of the general run of movie-goer everywhere. The cartoon is usually considered a pleasing little hors d'oeuvre to be enjoyed along with more substantial fare. That this hors d'oeuvre is welcome is apparent in the little murmurs of anticipated delight which still run through most audiences when the faces of Pluto, Mickey Mouse or Mr. Magoo come on to the screen. It is as though the audience realizes that for a few minutes they will be spared the sensational horrors which so often appear in the newsreel, or the tired clichés of a third rate travelogue. With the cartoon the audience can enter into a realm of pure fantasy, in which the laws of gravity are non-existent, where pain is not pain and where characters become symbols or stereotypes, not to be taken very seriously.

The audience which strayed in to see the animated films at Cannes (the tickets were

free) bore little resemblance to the self-conscious, publicity hungry international set which attended the gala openings of the longer features. The cartoons were attended by the producers themselves, a motley crew from every corner of the earth, and casual spectators from the streets, curious and unprejudiced. It was interesting to watch the reaction of this audience to films which ranged all the way from animated folk tales of Texas to heavy political propaganda from both sides of the iron curtain. The actor who drew the most spontaneous outburst of laughter was that ageless veteran whose career has remained unchanged throughout the years, Mr. Donald Duck. His frustration in the film which so delighted the audience was caused by his ineffectual efforts to fall asleep in spite of a relentless neon light which kept flashing off and on, and the insistent sound of dripping water from a tap which gradually increased in his imagination until each drop seemed a bomb visibly shaking the whole earth with rhythmic concussions. Donald's frustration seemed on that afternoon in Cannes to touch a note of understanding which reached across the barriers of language and nationality. This particular film was, as always with Disney, elaborately animated, no economy tricks employed, no corners cut. The sound track with its metamorphosis of dripping water to world-shaking "booms" was imaginative and appropriate to the medium. Also, like most of Disney's films, it was a sample of the usual

over-cute style with background drawings similar to the easiest kind of commercial advertising.

It is impossible to consider the animated film in the United States without thinking first of Disney. After 30 years his name is still synonymous with the short cartoon in the minds of most of the American movie-audience. Sometimes during the long period since his first exciting Silly Symphonies appeared, the work from his large organisation in California seemed to have sunk into the doldrums. Formula replaced invention. The medium lost its initial public appeal. Disney's excursions into the field of "live action" have been sometimes rewarding, sometimes disappointing. Some of the wild life films have recaptured the excitement of his early cartoons, while the romantic historic costume pieces have often seemed banal. Always a clever showman, he has recently built a large fun fair, or amusement park in California which serves also as a setting for television programme material. When, from time to time, a new feature length cartoon appears, such as *Lady and The Tramp*, in which the chief characters are dogs, one is amazed at the technical slickness of the animation and annoyed by the weak story line, which seems to be influenced by the wish to include every sure-fire box-office trick. This approach does not lead to any fresh experiments within the medium.

It was the short film *Gerald McBoing-Boing* which first brought a radical change of style to the attention of the public in America and soon after to the cinema-goers in Europe. This highly original short film, produced by U.P.A. Pictures, with finely integrated music by Gail Kubik and with sophisticated visual elements, seemed to satisfy a public at that time weary of the Disney formula. The talented minds which produced "Gerald" had made previous cartoons in which visual wit and economical animation had replaced the elaborately evolved techniques established by the larger studios, but these films had never been seen in the theatres. Some of the U.P.A. men had worked previously in the Disney Studios. The organisation under the leadership of Stephen Busustow has now expanded into the field of television. Robert Cannon, one of the most brilliant U.P.A. directors, brings a fertile imagination and fresh approach to each new film he creates. Another director, Pete Burness, who has been with the U.P.A. since its early days, has created a

now popular cartoon character, Mr. Magoo, whose blithe innocence and near-sightedness leads him unscathed and unconcerned through the violence of the modern world. Mr. Magoo, like Donald Duck, has become a beloved international personality.

The U.P.A. style, according to their own spokesmen, derives from "modern" art. It is uncluttered, flat and often linear. The characters do not seem bound by any natural physical laws of movement. Perhaps one of the greatest contributions of the U.P.A. is that they have shown the public that the less realistic a movement is, the more creditable it becomes optically. Disney sometimes bases the movement of his characters on live action models, as with Alice in *Alice in Wonderland*. The greater the effort to imitate realistic movement, the more apt one is to be aware of the stroboscopic nature of the medium, the more jittery the result. If legs are used to express the *symbol* of walking, rather than the *imitation* of walking, the illusion of movement is more acceptable, a paradox which indicates the validity of the "modern" art approach. Like any device this simplification can be carried too far. If the human figure becomes too abstract it may lose all its expressive power. Usually the U.P.A. figures, moving flatly on a flat screen are consistent, humorous and convincing.

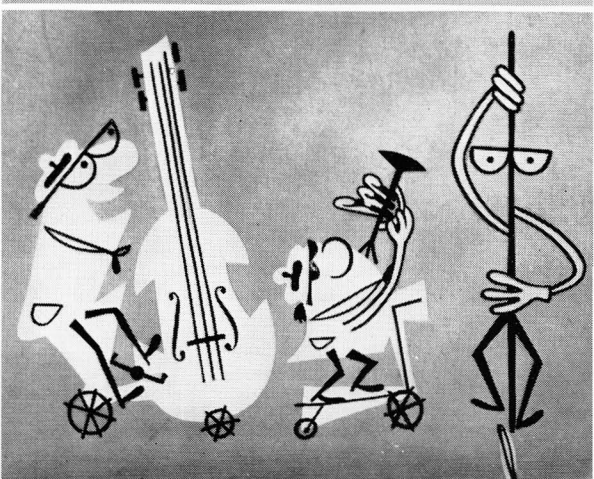
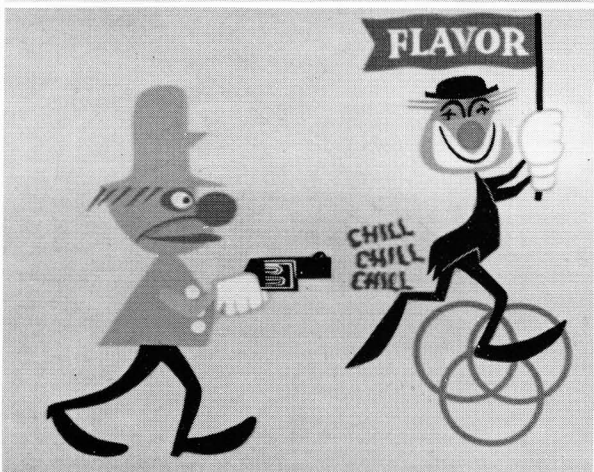
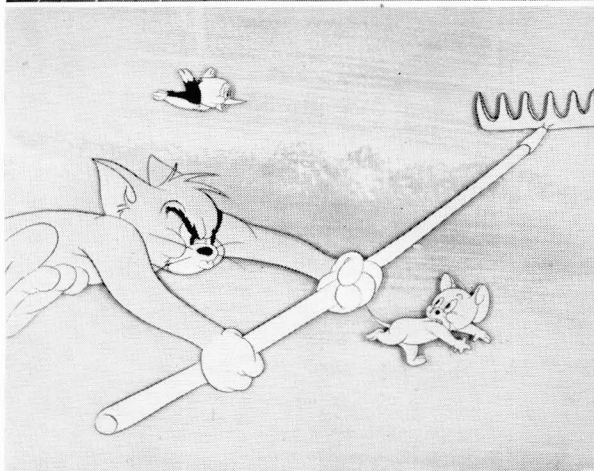
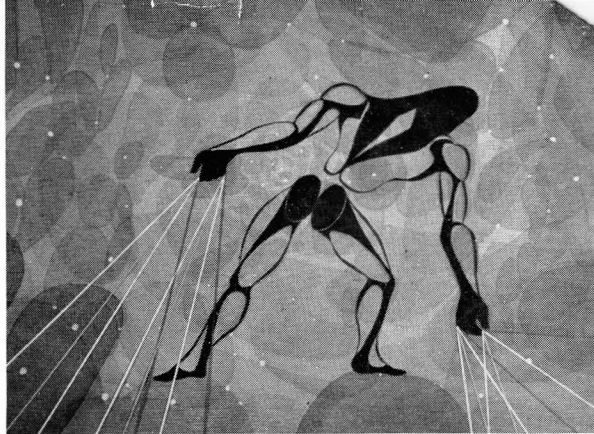
Less effective have been certain of the U.P.A. attempts to animate the drawings of "big name" illustrators, such as Thurber and Bemelmans. *The Unicorn in the Garden* and *Madeline* are examples. Since the quality of both Thurber's and Bemelmans' drawings depends on a subtlety and unevenness of line which is impossible to use in the animation technique, where every celledoid must have an almost mechanical similarity, the flavour of the original is lost and the result is far less successful than the work of lesser known artists, whose training within the film medium has taught them its restrictions.

Nevertheless, the U.P.A. has been a healthy influence in the United States. The proof that a new style has had its effect on Disney and his imitators is seen in their efforts to modernise their own productions. Disney has released a short history of music called *Whistle, Toot, Plunk and Boom*, which seemed to imply that if his studios wished, they too could work in the "modern" style. The popular M.G.M. films, with incredibly fast pacing and surrealist gags, seem also to have

been influenced by the general trend toward simplification and more abstract characterisation.

The U.P.A. quite justly boasts that its background painters are serious modern artists, some of whom exhibit in well known galleries and have work in art museums. But the real problem of any single individual in the United States who wants to use the animated film as a creative medium is quite different from the problem of the easel painter. Film-making has become, although not necessarily, a collective undertaking. An individual artist, in making a film, must face the fact that the essence of animation is the creation of an illusion of movement synchronised to a composed sound track. This requires a certain knowledge of music and of choreography of line, form and colour. Even if the artist masters these elements, he is then confronted with the inescapable fact that to produce even a short film involves a costliness out of proportion to the creation of the other arts. Few individuals are free to cope with this dilemma. Norman McLaren, in Canada, is the outstanding exception. McLaren, since he began, has worked alone, or with the single collaboration of a composer. His experiments are the direct impact of his own ideas on to film. No assembly line of animators, tracers and painters stands between him and his finished product. But McLaren is subsidised by the Canadian Film Board which, in the face of some opposition, has had the courage to defend the position that McLaren's contribution has brought them large dividends in prestige. Surely it is accurate to say that the most forward looking groups of film-makers owe much to McLaren's researches.

In the United States a few colleges with courses of study in film techniques provide the student with equipment and the opportunity to experiment. It is too soon for these islands of isolated effort to show any tangible results on the professional field. Certain foundations in the United States have, in the past, granted stipends to individuals for "creative work in film-making". These generous grants made it possible for an individual to plan a film, but it is outside of their scope to provide the vastly greater sum of money necessary for production. Few of these projects have been realised. Sponsors who *do* provide enough money for even a one-reeler quite understandably want the film to sell their product, no matter whether it be soap,







*The Lady and the Tramp (U.S.A.)*

cancer research or democracy. Which does not mean that good films cannot be made on these themes. But there is little chance for the individual to produce a genuinely experimental film on his own subject.

It is difficult to say what the future of this medium in the U.S. will be. At present animation is still popular in the entertainment fields and in commercial television. Some of the most imaginative uses of animation at present are in one-minute TV commercials. Animation is in demand in those sponsored industrial films where a mechanical concept can be shown more clearly than it can in live-action. Animation is also useful in industrial films which try to express abstract ideas or fantasy.

Donald Duck, in his better movements, still communicates to an international audience. It would be interesting to speculate, however, as to what animation might have

been if Disney had not had his enormous influence. In the first place, animation might not necessarily have been only cartoon. The simplest visual element, a dot, or a line, can become a dancing symbol and convey an idea, an association. These ideas could be developed with other means than by conventional story telling. The film need not always be based on a literary concept. It could be, for the spectator, an experience like seeing dancing, or hearing music. Within the medium not only new forms, but new ways of expression could be evolved. The animated film need not always be a pastiche, a sequence of gags or a fairy tale. It could be a powerful medium. It is condensed and potent. Like most potent things, it is better in small doses. But in a brief time it can pack a terrific punch. In the end its possibilities are limited only by the imagination of the filmmaker.





France

Mr. Magoo Beats the Heat, Madeline (U.S.A.)

## What Future is there for the Animated Film?

JEAN IMAGE, Paris

BETWEEN 1942 and 1953, our production of entertainment short and feature-length cartoons was relatively flourishing; advertising cartoons had not yet attained their present-day importance.

After producing three feature-length films: *La Bergère et le Ramoneur* (Paul Grimault and André Sarrut), *Jeannot l'Intrépide* and *Bonjour Paris* (Jean Image) and a certain number of shorts such as *Le Petit Soldat*, *Le Voleur de Paratonnerres* (Paul Grimault), *Le Troubadour de la Joie* (Omer Bocquey), *Les Actualités Romaines* (Jacques Remise), *Kapok* (Arcady), *Les Aventures du Capitaine Sabord* (André Rigal), *Les Fables de la Fontaine* (Jean Image), French cartoon films obtained worldwide success and rewards at Film Festivals.

It should be stressed that the greater part of these productions were made under primitive working conditions, and their distribution was never assured. Towards 1953, in spite of every effort, nearly all production of non-advertising animated films was stopped; alone Henri Gruel and Jean Image continued their efforts to maintain French production in this field.

Here are the films produced between 1955 and 1956: *Le Voyage de Badabou*, *La Rose et le Radis Noir* (Henri Gruel), *Le Loup et l'Agneau*, *Monsieur Victor* or *La Machine à retrouver le Temps* (Jean Image).

The constant progress made by advertising animated films during the last ten years is indisputable. As well as the two largest production companies, La Comète and Les

Cinéastes Associés, many producers are devoting themselves exclusively to this form of the cartoon film. Strong influences of "modernism" and "stylisation" are noticeable in the latest productions, and it is undeniable that on this level the French animated cartoon is amongst the best in the world, the proof being that our studios work not only for France but also steadily for the United States, Great Britain, Belgium, and other countries.

It should be noted that outside the technique of animated cartoon, France has been for some time among the leading countries developing three-dimensional puppets, through the work of Raik and Alexeiff.

Parallel to the advertising film, production is also carried out in France on instructional films and animated-diagrams; Jean Image's studios produced in 1955 the first 10-minute instructional film in cartoon form in colour for the French Mining Industry called: *Un Grain de Bon Sens*.

Such is the present position. As for the future, I believe that world television offers countless openings for animation. Already a very large number of advertising films are being made for television. It is true that for the moment television in France does not use advertising, but nearby stations such as Luxembourg and Monte Carlo will be needing more and more short advertising films.

The big opportunity offered to us is colour television, which is making such a brilliant start in America. Short subjects of

from 7 to 13 minutes will be required for this form of entertainment, which will soon be introduced to European stations.

We are well aware of the great success which the work of Walt Disney and U.P.A. has obtained on American television, and we believe that we have before us immense possibilities for new forms of artistic expression suitable to this new kind of entertainment.

In front of the small television screen, with its family audience, a kind of intimacy is growing up between the artist film-maker and the spectator. The new factor is that while we are in fact addressing millions of spectators at one time, each one of them must be addressed individually: in fact "intimate" films must be created for "millions of people".

In fact, at the moment, French animated film producers want nothing more than to exploit to the full their international success in advertising films. According to the latest reports given at the Cannes Festival on the subject of advertising films, 27 animated films were shown by foreign organisations, which proves that the animated film (such as puppet-films by Alexeiff and Raik, and cartoons by two or three big specialised organisations) has reached its greatest level of prosperity since its conception in France.

The principal preoccupation of designers and producers of these films is novelty of expression, novelty not only in subject matter but also on the drawing-board. Taking into account all that is being done, one wonders what will be the future of this kind of development and whether the advertisers who are at present interested in this type of publicity will maintain their preference for this kind of film. It is a fact, however, that it is through cartoons and puppet films that advertising can be most effective in the shortest possible time. This affects also Interlude transmissions for television as much as adver-

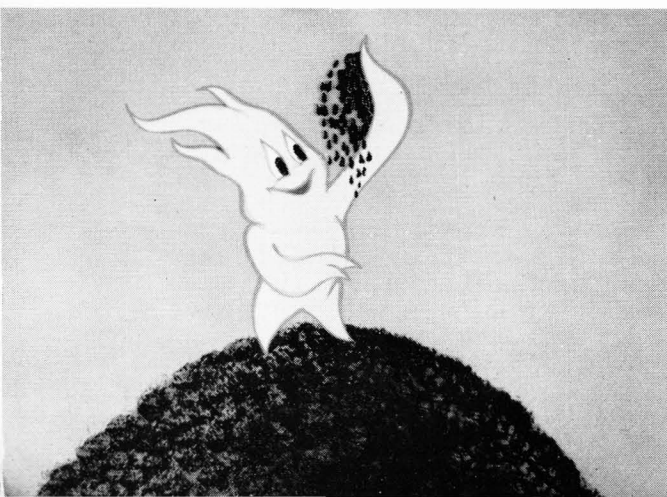
tising films. A great challenge is offered to artists and animated film producers to find something "new".

The non-advertising and non-sponsored film can rarely survive outside the frame-work of a state-subsidised organisation; the interesting and prospering Canadian experiment (National Film Board of Canada) shows that a result can be obtained on this level within a democracy.

An experiment is being made in France at the moment which aims to band together the few remaining independent animated film producers—or those wishing to acquire independence—to pool, as it were, their work in animation. This organisation would aim to make experimental films and carry out research with the object of finding freshness of style and also of technique.

At the time of writing, nothing definite can be said yet about this new scheme, except the fact that the idea was first proposed at the Animated Film Festival at Cannes where, at last, after years of competition and isolation, our producers were able to meet, exchange ideas, explain their difficulties, and express their desire for a solution to their problems. It was realised that there is still a future for this work in France, where the animated film was invented just over 50 years ago, and that following the fine work produced during the years 1945-50 there is also hope for the animated film for both cinema and television.

*La Bergère et le Ramoneur, Un Grain de Bon Sens, Ombrille et Parapluie (France)*



U.S.S.R.

## CARTOON FILMS IN SOVIET UNION

I. IVANOV-VANO, Moscow

GREAT importance for the development of cartoon films in the Soviet Union attaches to the Government's decision in 1936 to set up in Moscow a special cartoon studio—Soyuzmultfilm. This studio brought together a number of the main groups working on cartoons in Moscow under the direction of veterans of Soviet cartoon-making.

During the first stage of Soyuzmultfilm's development it included groups working under the following artists: A. V. Ivanov and P. P. Sazonov; O. P. Khodatayeva and the sisters Valentina and Zinaida Brumberg; I. Ivanov-Vano; D. N. Babichenko; L. A. Amalrik; V. I. Polkovnikov; V. G. Suteyev; B. P. Dezhkin. Later these were joined by artists from Leningrad, M. M. Tsekhanovsky and M. S. Pashchenko, and by a representative from Armenia, L. K. Atamanov. These film-makers remain to this day the basic artistic nucleus of the Soyuzmultfilm studio.

The unification of small, scattered cartoon studios into one large studio of all-Union importance did not deprive directors and artists of their individuality; on the contrary it made possible the development of more advanced undertakings from the point of view both of artistry and production, and set cartoon-making in our country on a new path.

The Soyuzmultfilm studio is today the biggest studio for the production of cartoon films in Europe, not merely in the Soviet Union. It is equipped with the latest in modern apparatus for new technical processes, and has on its staff a large number of artists specialising in various branches of cartoon production.

The lines along which Soviet cartoon-making is developing are extremely varied. Political and social satire, film "pamphlets", cartoon posters, scientific and educational cartoons, fables, fairy-tales (both traditional and modern), fantasy, musical comedy—these are only a few of the genres in which Soviet cartoon-makers are working. But in spite of this variety, there is one line of

development which can be said to be the main one in Soviet cartoons, and that is the filming of fairy-tales, the world of fantasy and caricature. The main audiences for which we are working are children of all age-groups. The main task the Soyuzmultfilm studio was given at its inception was the provision of films for children and young people. During the thirty years of its existence it has coped creditably with this task, and in the course of recent years can claim successes of some importance.

Children's cartoon films from the Soviet Union are well known beyond the bounds of our country. Films such as *The Little Hump-Backed Horse* directed by I. Ivanov-Vano and *Grey Neck* directed by L. Amalrik and V. Polkovnikov have been shown with great success in America as well as in Europe. Director Mstislav Pashchenko's films *Forest Travellers*, *When the Christmas Trees Are Lit*, *The Disobedient Kitten* and *The Unusual Match* have appeared on the screens of many countries.

Equally well known is the work of the directors Leonid Amalrik and Vladimir Polkovnikov—*The High Hill*, *The Magic Shop*, *The Arrow Flies Into Fairyland* and *Snowball Postman*; and the work of Mikhail Tsekhanovsky, who in recent years has directed *The Tale of the Fisherman and the Fish*, *Kashtanka* and *The Frog Princess*. The talented director Lev Atamanov also has some interesting works to his credit—*The Yellow Stork*, *The Crimson Flower* and, particularly, his *Golden Antelope*; the same can be said of Alexander Ivanov and his *Rab and Bit*, *The Painted Fox*, *Deep In the Forest*, *The Pipe and the Bear*, etc. A number of Soviet cartoons—*Song of Joy*, *The Fox and the Blackbird*, *The Little Hump-Backed Horse*, *The Seven-fold Flower*, *Grey Neck*, *The Disobedient Kitten*, *The Painted Fox*, *The Tale of the Fisherman and the Fish*, *The Unusual Match*, *The Magic Shop*, *Sarmiko*, *The Gallant Heart*, *Deep in the Forest*, *Fire in Yaranga* etc.—have received first prizes and diplomas of honour at international film festivals.



At the present time large numbers of Soviet cartoons are being dubbed into the languages of Europe, Asia and of a number of African countries; they are, in fact, being shown today in fifty-nine different countries.

The central cartoon film studio Soyuzmultfilm has sixteen full-scale production groups engaged on regular planned work. Each production group possesses its own character, and works in its own particular style.

Alongside the "old masters" of our art there is growing up a new and talented generation of cartoon directors and artists; for instance, the young director Ivan Aksenchuk, to whom belongs the excellent production *The Hazel Wand*, based on the Rumanian folk-tale of the same name; Yevgeni Raikovsky and Vladimir Degtyarev, who have made an interesting film from a Korean folk-tale—*Pak the Brave*; also the talented artist Yevgeni Migunov, and others; in the near future they will carry on with honour the work of the older generation of Soviet cartoonists. The ranks of those working in cartoon films are reinforced by a planned intake of new recruits; in the All-Union State Institute of Cinematography (VGIK) special training is provided for artists who will later work in cartoons. All those students who have successfully completed these courses in the Institute are now working satisfactorily at the Soyuzmultfilm and other cartoon studios within the Soviet Union. The names of former students of the Institute who are now talented cartoon artists are well-known in the Soviet Union. Apart from this source of new workers, the Soyuzmultfilm studio itself trains cartoon artists at courses it organises independently, and which are attended by thirty young artists who passed a competitive entrance examination.

In recent years the masters of cartoon-making have come to turn more and more often to the best examples of folk art and of classical literature for their subjects, and have striven to re-create on the screen not only the idea and content of such works, but the full flavour of their particular artistic form. Directors have begun to approach a script, regarding it not as an opportunity for the production of a spectacle full of tricks and transformations, but as the basis for the general sense of the film and for its artistic character. For this reason a whole series of well-known children's authors and script-writers have been drawn into work on cartoons, and Soviet cartoons have them to

thank for the ideas behind many of the best works produced in the post-war years.

In Moscow there are a number of special children's cinemas which show nothing but cartoons. In their repertoire of Soviet cartoons for children there are fables, Russian folk-tales and folk-tales of other peoples of the USSR, the classical fairy-stories of Pushkin, stories and little tales in verse for very small children, films about sport, musical films and adventure stories. At the present time the Soyuzmultfilm studio is preparing for release fairy-tales of many nations. Hans Andersen's *Ugly Duckling*, in a cartoon version produced by a young director, Vladimir Degtyarev, is already being shown. So is a full-length film, *The Enchanted Boy*, based on the fantasy by the Swedish authoress Selma Lagerlöf. This film has a script by M. Volpin; the directors are Vladimir Polkovnikov and Alexandra Snezhko-Blotskaya; artists—Lev Milchin and Grazhina Brashishkite. Production of another full-length film is now completed—*The Twelve Months*, based on the fairy-tale play by Marshak, directed and produced by I. Ivanov-Vano. The Brumberg sisters, those veterans of cartoon direction, recently completed production of an Albanian folk-tale, *The Helpful Stick*. The young director Ivan Aksenchuk has made a film from an Uzbek tale, *The Stork*. Vladimir Polkovnikov is finishing a screen version of an Indian folk-tale, *The Young Jackal and the Camel*. Mikhail Tsekhanovsky is at present working on another Indian tale, *The Little Girl and the Tiger*. This film will be ready by the end of this year.

Director Dmitri Babichenko, who recently made an interesting three-reel film which was well reviewed in the press, *A Million in the Bag*, is now working on a film to be called *Little Shogo*, which is based on themes from Afghan folk-tales. This production is to be completed in November of this year. One of the studio's oldest directors, Alexander Ivanov, has completed a "comic tale with a moral for children"—*Trouble in the Wood*, which relates how the bear ate too much honey and then got toothache. (Moral—look after your teeth and don't be afraid of the dentist.) Two young directors, Yevgeni Raikovsky and Boris Stepanov, have made a film called *Murzilka's Adventures* which is to be the first of a series showing the same cartoon characters.

Director Leonid Amalrik is working on a



film for small children to be called *The Little Ship*; script is by Vladimir Suteyev. Director Pyotr Nosov is completing a film based on a Ukrainian folk-tale, *The Pie*. Director Mstislav Pashchenko, in collaboration with artist Boris Dezhkin, has finished *Old Acquaintances*—this is a comedy of sport, in which the audience once again meets the same heroes as in *The Unusual Match*. Besides the films already mentioned, there are others now in production in the studio based on Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, French, Italian, Russian, Chinese and Egyptian folk-tales. Also in production is a full-length screen version of Andersen's *The Snow Queen*, directed by Lev Atamanov. The Brumberg sisters are starting work on a film to be called *Wishes Come True* or *Zerbinoteau the Solitary*. This film is based on the French tale by E. Laboulé about the happy wood-cutter Zerbinot. Mstislav Pashchenko will begin work on a four-reel film, *Cipollino*—a screen version of the story by the well-known Italian writer Gianni Rodari, about the adventures of the "onion-boy" Cipollino, a tireless fighter for justice who is a favourite with children. Director Ivan Aksenchuk is to start work on *Cicco of Naples in the Magic Forest*, the script for which is written on themes from a play by Gianni Rodari and M. Saratelli called *The Wishing Plant* and from Rodari's poems. The general theme of the script is peace, friendship and happiness for children over all our planet. I. Ivanov-Vano is thinking of work on a film based on a Russian folk-tale—*At the Pike's Bidding*—about the poor but cheerful Yemel, who is amply rewarded for his wit, kindness and hard work. After directing *The Little Ship* Leonid Amalrik will be working on *Pussycat's House*. The script is based on the fairy-tale play of the same name by Marshak. The young and talented artist Yevgeni Migunov is starting work, in collaboration with Arkadi Raikin, a well-known variety actor, on production of a film-feuilleton to be called *A*

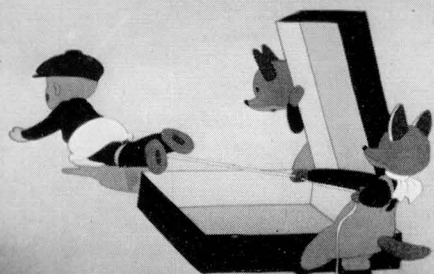
*Fairy tale for Grown-Ups*, which will criticise some less worthy aspects of our daily life.

After the famous productions by Alexander Ptushko *The New Gulliver* and *The Golden Key*, three-dimensional puppet cartoons have received a new lease of life; new, young artists have taken up work in this genre, as has also a famous master of the art, Sergei Obraztsov, Artistic Director of the State Puppet Theatre; he has just finished production in the Soyuzmultfilm studio of a big film called *A Heavenly Creature*.

Director Vladimir Degtyarev is just finishing work on a puppet film based on the well-known Russian folk-tale Jack Frost. At present in production is a puppet cartoon called *Safe in Port*. This is a musical comedy film with a contemporary theme; in it are ridiculed people who hide inner poverty beneath a glossy surface. This film is directed by A. Karanovich. Two more satirical films are also in production—*Three-Course Dinner*, directed by G. Lomidze, and *The Bogy Who Couldn't Scare Anyone*, directed by Roman Davydov. The output of cartoon and puppet films in the Soviet Union is increasing greatly from year to year. Apart from the Soyuzmultfilm studio cartoon production has been started once again at the Tbilisi Film Studio. Production of scientific and educational cartoons is widely developed in the Soviet Union; this form of cartoon-making is mainly concentrated in the popular science film studios of Moscow, Leningrad, Sverdlovsk, Kiev and other cities. Cartoon technique is widely employed in documentary and news-reel studios too, particularly at the Central News-reel Studio in Moscow.

A whole series of higher educational institutions of the Soviet Union—Moscow University, the Moscow Aviation Institute etc.—also various scientific research centres, have their own cartoon studios and laboratories producing scientific and teaching cartoon films.

*The Unusual Match, The Vain Bear* (U.S.S.R.)



Canada

## ANIMATION FILMS IN CANADA

GUY L. COTE, Montreal

THE story of the animated film in Canada largely centres around the work accomplished at the National Film Board, the official government film agency established in 1940 by John Grierson to "interpret Canada to Canadians and to other nations". Under the direction first of Norman McLaren, then of Jim Mackay and now of Colin Low, the animation department of the N.F.B. has grown from a tiny nucleus of workers in 1941 to a thriving unit of some fourteen animation artists. During that time, over 75 short films have been produced, not including special animation sequences made for the Board's documentary productions.

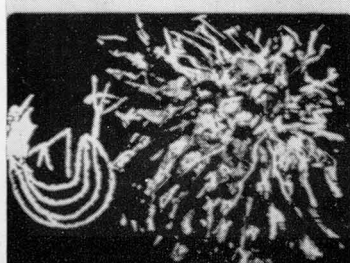
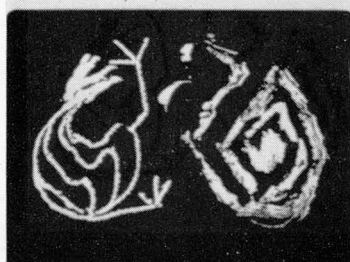
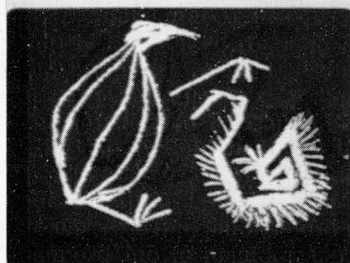
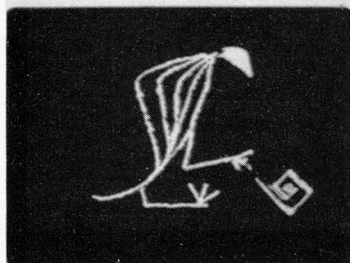
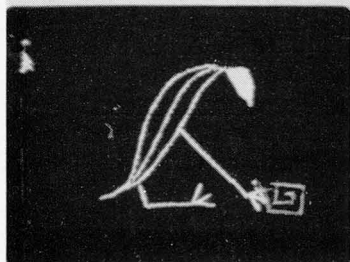
Diversity has been one of the characteristics of the department's work, both in the multitude of purposes for which its films have been executed as well as in the variety of animation techniques that have been employed, from paper cut-outs to three-dimensional puppets,

from simple drawings on translucent paper to complex cell films. The department works in small units, whose members are engaged in one or two particular projects over long periods of time, each drawing their own story board, designing the backgrounds, working out the animation, editing the picture and supervising the sound recording—in fact, the artists have the opportunity of following the creation of their film through all its stages. Thus, each member of Canada's animation department has experimented with most of the standard methods now employed in the industry and each in his own way has evolved fresh approaches to the technical and artistic problems of film production.

Early in the Board's history, it was decided to produce a series of animated films illustrating Canadian folksongs of French and English origin. Of these, the *Chants Populaires* are perhaps the most familiar to European audiences.

*The Romance of Transportation (Canada)*





*Cadet Rousselle*, also, was a spirited version of the old French ballad in which George Dunning and Colin Low utilised to good effect the technique of metal cut-outs. Dunning (who is now at the London office of U.P.A.) and Jim Mackay (who works independently in Toronto) are two well-known Canadian animation artists who have since set up their own production units: their early N.F.B. films—*Grim Pastures* and *Three Blind Mice* (Dunning), *Teeth are to Keep* and *Stanley Takes a Trip* (Mackay)—remain excellent examples of ingenuity, style and conciseness in educational films. In later years, artists such as Wolf Koenig, Robert Verrall, Grant Munro and Sydney Goldsmith were to collaborate on equally imaginative though more highly polished productions: *The Romance of Transportation* (which won the British Film Academy award in 1953), *Riches of the Earth* and *Huff and Puff*, to name a few. Colin Low, the present director of the unit, has not only distinguished himself in the field of animated films (*Challenge: Science vs. Cancer*) but is also a sensitive director of documentaries (*Corral, Gold*), an occupation which he feels gives him perspective and useful stimulation in his animation work. Now installed in its new quarters in Montreal, the unit is currently working on two ambitious projects about astronomy and architecture, as well as on numerous sponsored films for government departments.

It is true to say, however, that the work of Norman McLaren has somewhat overshadowed that of his Canadian colleagues. His unique position at the Board, which enables him to follow the byways of his fancy, has earned for him the international reputation of being a tireless experimenter. His pyrotechnical "doodles", as his friends sometimes refer to them, always seem to bring something new and unexpected to the screen. From his early beginnings at the Glasgow School of Fine Arts, McLaren has looked upon the business of picture making as a real adventure, inventing his own tools and dispensing with most of the paraphernalia that surrounds conventional productions, including cameras and sound recording apparatus. For many years, he has been helped by Miss Evelyn Lambart, who has been closely associated with a number of his films. For others, he has worked alone, tirelessly, the twentieth-century equivalent to a fifteenth-century miniaturist, often drawing his images by hand directly on to 35 mm. film—frame by frame—controlling by the subtleties of his brush stroke the life of those magic shadows which spring out of his personal world of poetry and fantasy.

There is little doubt that his short abstractions such as *Begone Dull Care* and *Blinkity Blank* (which won the British Film Academy Award in 1956) often surprise and delight an unsuspecting audience; nor can one deny that the message of *Neighbours*, the unfettered *espèglerie* of *Rhythmic*, or even the simple gentleness of *La Poulette Grise*, can hold and fascinate a spectator by the novelty of the invention, the carefree humour and the depth of observation which these films so



abundantly display. McLaren's work has gained a succès d'estime which the commercial exhibitors—had they somewhat more initiative and daring—could readily transform into a larger public acclaim. What is possibly not so readily appreciated, however, is the very great contribution which McLaren has made to the aesthetics of the cinema, and more particularly of the animation film. For, in his own way, he has once again restated the importance of the cinema's very fundamentals: *motion* and *picture*. In the early 1940's, at a time when the naturalistic cartoon was in its heyday, McLaren was already instinctively asserting by his work that the future of the animated film did not reside in clever imitations of a sentimentalised reality. Stripping the film to its bared, transparent celluloid, McLaren ~~dared to~~ re-investigate the powers of cinematic movement, of visual and aural counterpoint, of intermittent animation, of impressionistic clusters, of overlapping dissolves, inventing his own sounds, destroying the rectangular visual frame itself by the very act of drawing a single brush stroke across a succession of time-images.

"Animation is not the art of drawings-that-move, but the art of movements-that-are-drawn" has ~~written~~ McLaren. "What happens between each frame is much more important than what exists on each frame. Animation is therefore the art of manipulating the invisible interstices that lie between frames." Thus a uniquely dedicated film-artist explains what he constantly reminds us of in his work, from the charming *C'est L'aviron* to the ethereal movements of *Now Is The Time* and the brilliant simplicity of *Hen Hop*. The road in which he is engaged is a narrow one—few, if any, had they a pen, a razor blade, a chalk pencil or a pair of scissors, could hope to follow him or build on his inventions. But McLaren's message is clear and universal: through the most abstract of his doodles, the most well-timed of his movements, the most riotous of his colour fantasies, McLaren tells us that the world of the animated film is far from fully explored, and that those invisible interstices between frames still have many secrets to disclose.

*interstices*

## Poland

# IS ANIMATED FILM A TRUE ART ?

ONE of the pioneers of the puppet film was a Pole—Wladyslaw Starewicz, who worked in France. Although animation was developed to a minor extent in Poland itself before the War by such film-makers as Franciszka and Stefan Themerson, it was the post-war work of Potecki and Wasilewski which established contemporary Polish puppet and, later, cartoon films. In this article, Wlodzimierz Haupe, film director and Chairman of the Artistic Council of Animated Films in Poland, discusses the problem of organising special animation studios and developing cartoon and puppet films as works of art.

In Poland we now have two centres producing animated films. They are: the Puppet Film Studio in Tuszyn near Lodz, and the Cartoon Film Studio in Bielsko. A third studio is being set up in Warsaw; it will produce both puppet and cartoon films. In these studios many film-makers are working; the work of some of them is already known to audiences at the Cannes, Venice, Edinburgh

and Karlovy Vary Festivals, but there are also some younger film-makers who are busy developing their technique. Of the senior puppet film-makers I should mention Zenon Wasilewski (*The Dragon of Cracow*), Wlodzimierz Haupe and Halina Bielinska (*Laurence's Orchard*, *Circus Under the Stars* and *The Moon's Story*), and of the younger generation Teresa Badzian (*The Uncommon Journey* and *The New House*) and Edward Sturlis (*The Dirty Boy* and *Adventures of the Hoity-Toity Knight*); and for cartoon films: Lechoslaw Marszalek (*Stubborn Little Goat* and Mrs. Twardowska), Wladyslaw Nehrebecki (*The Woodpecker Told the Owl* and *Professor Filutek in the Park*), and Wacław Wajzer (*Tale of Siskins* and *The Land of King Eel*).

I have only mentioned above the titles of such Polish animated films that are, or could be, known to European audiences. But to be exact I should add that the film-makers I have named have produced about fifty films, inclusive of those that are in preparation.



This is little enough, considering it represents the results of a production period extending over ten years. But one must take into account that a great deal of time has been needed during these years in experiment. The existing animation studios have only recently been organised in their present form, and can produce now about 10 animated films a year. In the future, the output should rise from 30 to about 60 films annually. The makers of animated films have the working conditions necessary for regular production, and the chance to develop individual artistry. They have established their own Artistic Council where they can freely exchange their views. These discussions enable the more experienced to test their views against those of the others, and so confirm that their artistic line is the right one, and for the less experienced the discussions are of help in the development of their artistic individuality.

In this work there are two main problems: first, unit organisation and, second, the strictly creative problem. Unit organisation depends on the difficulty of maintaining the artistic individuality of each creative film-maker, as all of them have to use the same team of assistants. Between the originating film-makers and their finished film stands a considerable number of people. In the cartoon film they are animators, in-betweeners, tracers, painters; in the puppet film setting-designers, doll-makers, animators, costumers, assistants, and so on. This team of people, having ended work under one director, have to begin to work with another, whose method of work and plastic style are quite different. The difficulty is that the team is scarcely able to change immediately from one style to another and so develops a style of its own, derived from that of the individual directors.



*Katarynka, Professor Filutek's Duel, Katarynka (Poland)*

Thus the artistic individuality of each director is lost. This is why, instead of continuing to use the same unit for all directors, a method of separate teams for each individual director has been developed. This preserves artistic individuality, but on the other hand makes the organisation of production more difficult. The directors claim now that it would be better to retain individual creative teams consisting of the director, cameraman, scenographer, animators and assistants, but that the executive studio should remain common to them all. This should offer a unified production-line common to the whole studio. In the immediate future some solution to this question must be found.

The matter I referred to as the "creative problem" concerns the direction in which the animated film should develop. First of all I should mention the advertising film. In Poland this kind of production does not yet exist. Sometimes an occasional advertising film appears, but these do not represent any standard form of production. The very few foreign advertising films that we have seen were on a low level, and this has had a restraining influence on the development of this branch of production at home.

So in principle, there exists in Poland only the artistic animated film, unrelated to any didactic purpose. I have already stressed that up to now our puppet and cartoon films have appeared only in a standard technical form. We lack any experimental search for some other less determined form of animation. I mean such experiments as those of Norman McLaren, Alexeïff and others. This does not mean that we have done nothing at all. We regard the animated film not only as a means of telling stories in recognisable forms, but also as a means of developing shapes, colours, sounds and all other artistic elements which can arouse subtle artistic responses in the audiences.

Nevertheless, we must not forget the people to whom our work is addressed. It is difficult to offer complicated artistic forms to an audience unprepared for them by a gradual process of breaking in. Personally, I admit that I am working first for the audience and then for myself. I may be wrong, but I only want to explain why Polish animation has developed primarily in the direction of

entertainment only. But there exist many different subjects for films at the moment. Further, the lines of artistic interest of the individual creative directors are essentially established. They do not search for subjects blindly, and they do not make finding a good script dependent on chance. For example, we can find in our production folk tales, short stories, adaptation of episodes from classical literature, satirical caricatures and, finally, more experimental attempts to depart from the normal pattern of animation in the direction of formal conception.

One of the important problems connected with the further development of our production is the lack of professional film criticism of animated films. Film critics are always apt to hold the opinion that the animated film is something still clinging to the fair-ground. I am not referring here merely to Poland. The talks I had with the French critic, André Martin, an enthusiast for the animated film, prove that the absence of this branch of film criticism is not confined to Poland. This is an astonishing fact. Our international achievements in every kind of animation were demonstrated at the last Cannes Festival and were a proof of how greatly the animated film has developed in recent years its capacity to offer audiences hitherto unknown artistic enjoyment and responses. But the absence of proper criticism and appreciation has a disintegrating effect on the creators of animated films, and you often hear that some of them—even those with established reputations—abandon puppet or cartoon film-making to take up other kinds of film art. The position in Poland is better in this respect because animated films are very popular with our audiences, but in general this problem exists and it is wrong not to feel concerned about the problems of colleagues with whom we feel linked very closely.

Under such conditions the question whether animated films can be counted seriously as art or have only a future in advertising (which does not exclude its own artistic values) is not a foolish query. The teething troubles of the animated film, which even after fifty years is still the cinema's big child, can be cured only by the creative film-makers themselves.

I would like to express my profound belief that the animated film is really a great art form.



Czechoslovakia

## A REVIEW OF THE PAST YEAR

JAROSLAV BROZ, Prague

FOR the uninitiated observer from abroad, the last year was a barren one for Czechoslovak puppeteers and cartoonists. One might perhaps even speak of a certain stagnation in the creative work of the Czechoslovak puppet and cartoon film-makers. Even Jiri Trnka, the most talented of artists in this special field was unproductive for a while after finishing his not too successful film in three parts, *The Good Soldier Schweik*, because he needed to become familiar with the new technique—the use of the wide screen. Those who love the Czechoslovak puppet films remember longingly the time when from Trnka's unit there issued one weird and wonderful puppet film after another!

Not even Trnka's colleagues and competitors, Hermina Tyrlova and Karel Zeman of the puppet studio in Gottwaldov, made any outstanding films this year. During the making of the fairy tale puppet film *Goldilocks*, Hermina Tyrlova attempted a dramatic style which was essentially foreign to her lyrical talent. And Karel Zeman, after his outstanding feature-length film *Journey to Primaeval Times* (shown at the Edinburgh Festival in 1955), only produced a light and amusing fragment *Mr. Prokoup*, a kind of intermezzo in his work.

That perhaps is the right word—intermezzo. The past year was an intermezzo in the work of the Czechoslovak puppeteers and cartoonists. It was not a period of stagnation, but rather a temporary pause during which to gather forces, a time of search for new media and new materials. But at the same time during this period in which masters of



*Goldilocks* (Czechoslovakia)

the art of animation were discovering a new path, a number of new talents appeared on the scene. To start with, Bretislav Pojar, the most talented of Trnka's pupils (his film *A Drop Too Much* which received a mention two years ago at Cannes introduced him to the film public) has made a short and amusing detective film called *Spejbl on the Scent*, the heroes of which are the two well-known puppets of the Josef Skupa theatre company. Pojar is now working on two further short films *The Lion and the Ditty* and *The Puppet Review*. His colleague, Stanislav Latal, has made use of two other well-known figures in puppetry in a fairy tale for children called *Kutasek and Kutilka at the Fair*. He has heightened the miming potentialities of the puppets by making use of animation in stages (stop-frame). Milos Makovec, a director of feature films, has made his debut in puppet films with *The Lost Sentry* shot on the basis



of a popular skit from past times. (It gained a "mention" this year at Venice). Two of Zeman's pupils, Zdenek Rozkopal, the artist, and Arnost Kupcik, the animator, have made a popular science trick film called *Black Diamond* which deals with the story of the origin of coal in the earth.

But let us return to the masters of puppetry. They too have been active during the past year or so, although the results of this activity must be judged in the future. Trnka has definitely decided to adapt Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* into the medium of the puppet film. For the present he has produced a script complete with drawings and sketches, and he is also doing something which makes him the envy of any feature film producer—he is creating the actors for the puppet film. As to his plans, we can only tell you this much, that *Midsummer Night's Dream* will be presented in puppet pantomime style.

Hermina Tyrlova is working on a fairy tale about toys come to life, called *The Fairy Tale about a Naughty Ball*, which tells how a little ball that would not listen to Grandfather's warning was deceived by an evil kite. Her next film will be *Kalamajka*, a puppet dance suite based on Moravian national songs.

Karel Zeman, after many experiments in the most various subjects, has found the one most suited to him in science fiction, and he is preparing a film which is being awaited eagerly based on Jules Verne's *The Discovery of Destruction* (Face au Drapeau). Zeman intends to produce this film as a composite trick film (with puppets, animated cartoon and live actors) in the style of the original illustrations to Jules Verne's novel. His aim is to reproduce as faithfully as possible the atmosphere and colouring of Jules Verne's period, which is dear to young people.

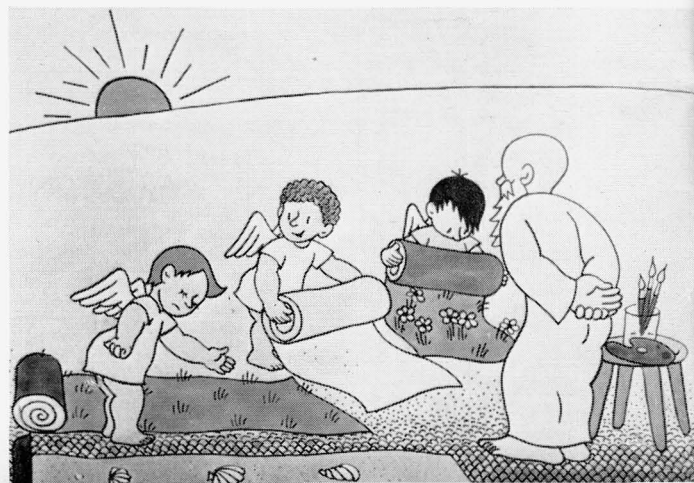
The situation in cartoon films is similar to that of the puppet film. Eduard Hofman, whose *Doggie and Pussy* (based on the fairy story by Josef Capek, the painter and writer—the brother of Karel Capek, the author of

*R.U.R.*) so delighted audiences of children, has found in France a new theme and artistic inspiration for his current film in the work of the cartoonist Jean Effel; he is making a cartoon series in three parts of Effel's *The Creation of the World*. The first part is almost finished, and the two further parts about the creation of Adam and Adam's union with Eve are in preparation. It is worth noting that the commentary in verse and the dialogue belonging to all the characters will be spoken by the comedian Jan Werich, whom filmgoers may remember from his dual star role in the film *The Emperor's Baker*.

Of the other cartoonists, who have recently concentrated perhaps almost too much on the production of advertising films, the only work worthy of attention is the medium-length film *The Devil and Kate*, directed by Vaclav Bedrich (who made *Boil, Little Pot*, which gained a "mention" in Venice), in which use has been made of a national fairy tale in the traditional Czech style, the drawings of which are the work of the artist, Josef Lada.

For the smaller children a short film called *How the Mole Earned his Trousers* will be finished by the end of this year. This is a modern fairy tale which explains how flax is cultivated, processed and used. By setting the action in the animal world (which in itself catches the attention of a young audience) and by introducing humour and wit, Zdenek Miler, the director, has avoided giving an impression of giving instruction.

On the whole, we think the outlook for the Czechoslovak cartoon and puppet film is a satisfactory one.



*The Creation of the World* (Czechoslovakia)



*Song of the Prairie. Spejbl on the Scent (Czechoslovakia)*

# ANIMATED FILM FESTIVAL

LONDON, 1957

THE first International Animated Film Festival in Great Britain is taking place at the National Film Theatre, South Bank, London, from 23rd February to 8th March, 1957.

The aims of the Festival are to demonstrate the contribution of animated films to the cinema during the past sixty years and to present the international development of this medium.

Productions from the following countries are being shown:

U.S.A.	China
Canada	Rumania
France	Japan
U.S.S.R.	Italy
Norway	Holland
Germany	Spain
Poland	Denmark
Czechoslovakia	Estonia
Mexico	England

A wide range of techniques is being demonstrated, from fluid celluloid animation to stop motion puppet animation, from silhouette to stereoscopic films and from abstracts painted directly on to film to films about paintings.

The entries fall into distinct categories, according to their content. Each day a different aspect of animation is featured, such as the comic, poetic, satirical, lyrical, dramatic and caricature cartoon, as well as puppets.

The daily programmes comprise one feature and five or six short supporting cartoons. Among the features is the French "La Bergère et le Ramoneur", the Russian "Golden Antelope", the Italian "Rose of Baghdad", "Animal Farm" and at least three American full-length films.

Some of the latest short cartoons from Europe and the U.S.A. are being shown for the first time in this country, including the works of Henri Gruel and Tarcaly (France) and Imre Nemeth (America).

An exhibition of original celluloids and backgrounds is to be arranged in the entrance hall of the Festival Cinema.

## BOOK REVIEW

**The Focal Encyclopædia of Photography.** The Focal Press, £5.5.0d.

For a review to do real justice to a magnum opus constructed on the scale that this one is, it should really be written by a team of experts; experts who would be the counterparts of the editorial team of ten, the fifty specialist consultants and the 197 authors from twenty-three countries who together were responsible for the two thousand articles which make up this new photographic encyclopædia. I am slightly encouraged, however, by the thought of the reviewer who, singlehanded, tackled the Encyclopædia Britannica.

The scope and aims of the Encyclopædia of Photography are set out at the beginning in the publisher's preface, "The subject of this encyclopædia," it says, "is the realm of photography—its technique, its art and its business. Adjoining and related technologies . . . are covered in ample detail." And even the most casual look through this huge book—it runs to over 1,300 pages of text—suggests that the editors and their collaborators have achieved what they set out to do impressively, and in the style one has come to expect of the Focal Press; i.e., technical subject matter dealt with in straightforward jargon-free English, and well-chosen and designed illustrations to illuminate the text. Incidentally, it has been ten years in the making and has grown three-fold on the original design.

Contributions have been sought from all over the world; the impressive list of authors and consultants from the Commonwealth, U.S.A., U.S.S.R., China and most of the European countries bear testimony to this, and it is good to see the names of so many members of the British Film Academy in the list. Roger Manvell and Denis Forman, for example, have been responsible for the entries on the B.F.A. and the B.F.I. respectively. I. D. Wratten has acted as consultant on Cinematography, and R. J. Spottiswoode, W. Suschitsky, and Howard Cricks are among the other Academy members contributing.

It is quite impossible in the space at my disposal to give any adequate idea of the scope and range of the entries. One can hint at it by picking out at random a few names of international experts like Rudolph Arnheim, Charles Brown, Harold Edgerton, Max Factor Jr., Dr. G. B. Harrison, who have contributed articles on subjects lying in their spheres. Probably the best way to get a bird's-eye view of the vast field covered by the encyclopædia is to look at the Synopsis of Subject Divisions where all the related major entries are brought together under subject headings. This also makes it an indispensable aid to anyone wishing to follow up a particular line of study or research.

For instance, I decided to make Cinematography my research project and my sampling dip into the encyclopædia. Under this heading in the synopsis all the entries dealing with the subject were grouped under two sub-headings, General and Special Aspects in the following manner: Under General: *Cinematography—Cine Terms—Cine Films (sub-standard)—Perforations—magazine—spool—cine film processing—Cine laboratories—splicing—Projection principles—Cine history.* Under Special Aspects: *High Speed Cinematography—Electroplane camera—Eye camera—Time Lapse Photography—Sound Recording—Three Dimensional Projection—Cinema Stills.*

When assessing this section, I bore in mind first that, as far as this encyclopædia was concerned, cinematography is "an adjoining and related technology"

and, secondly, again quoting the publishers, "any encyclopædia is mostly used for tracking down information on subjects with which the reader is not particularly familiar. No specialist is likely to seek information within his own field of work from a general reference book." Within this frame of reference I consider the subject has been thoroughly covered.

Though I read through all the articles I can only make detailed references to a few of the main ones. The general article on Cinematography, the joint effort of Julien Caunter and G. H. Sewell, succeeds more than adequately in squeezing a hoghead into a pint pot. I did feel though that both in the illustrations and in the bibliography there seemed an undue emphasis on sub-standard practice. The glossary of Cine Terms compiled by Tony Rose provides clear and concise definitions of most of the technical expressions in frequent use. Cine History by Brian Coe of the Kodak Research Laboratories is in my opinion absolutely first class—though I wonder if I might dare to challenge him on one small point and suggest, writing entirely from memory, that *La Cucuracha* and not *Flowers and Trees* was the first three-colour Technicolor picture to be shown?

You realise, reading this article, how long ago all these new gimmicks that have appeared in the last few years were first thought of. For instance, "Cineorama", a process using 10 projectors to throw a 360° picture on the walls of a circular building was patented in 1897. (Apparently the main reason why it never came into use was the difficulty of cooling a small projection room housing ten arc-projectors!) And in 1900 Louis Lumière using 75 mm. film was showing pictures on a 65 foot screen to audiences at an exhibition. A British patent of 1898 outlined the principles of stereo-cinematography by both anaglyph and polarising methods.

In conjunction with Brian Coe's article one should also read the one on Chronophotography which describes the investigations by Muybridge and Marey into human and animal motion.

Among the articles dealing with Special Aspects I should like to mention for their general excellence *High Speed Cinematography* by G. T. Schwartz, *Time Lapse Photography* by R. McV. Weston, *3D-Projection* by Howard Cricks—though there is no mention in the bibliography attached to this article of the books by the Spottiswoode brothers, Clyne, Dudley, etc. *Projection Principles* by G. H. Cook of Taylor, Taylor & Hobson, apart from its own merits, is as good an example as any of the very thorough cross-referencing which runs all through the encyclopædia.

Returning to consideration of the work as a whole, a word must be said about the illustrations; the diagrams, always a feature of Focal Press books, are excellent and have been used generously to point the exemplations given in the text. In addition some 400 beautifully reproduced photographs "serve a twofold purpose. In some cases . . . to clarify technical points . . . more often, however, they are meant to exemplify the range and variety of expression of which the photographic medium is capable."

Finally, this is by no means a cheap book, but when you remember that it is a whole photographic reference library in one volume, it is good value for the money.

Everyone associated with the Encyclopædia of Photography can be justifiably proud of a fine project finely carried out.

A. E. JEAKINS.



# THE BRITISH FILM ACADEMY

THE BRITISH FILM ACADEMY was founded in 1947 by a number of leading British film-makers to advance the art and technique of film-making by discussion and research and to encourage the exchange of ideas between creative film-makers both at home and abroad. Its present membership numbers some 400 senior British film-makers. The present activities of the Academy include:

- ★ the organisation of weekly discussion meetings and screenings for its Members and Associates during a nine-month season each year;
- ★ the presentation of Annual Awards, seven for the best films of the year, British and foreign, and five for acting performances;
- ★ the preparation of books and other publications concerned with the history and technique of film-making, and with the expression of the British film-makers' point of view about the medium in which they work;
- ★ the development of contacts at home and abroad between British and foreign film-makers, and the encouragement of further interest in the best in British production through lectures and broadcasts in Britain and overseas, and through the Academy's books and publications;
- ★ the collection and preservation of film-scripts, documents and other information relating to British films and film-makers.

# THE BRITISH FILM ACADEMY

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